

"Gr.RMAX VIRTUE."—There is no denying that from the end of the eighteenth century a current of moral awakening flowed through Europe. Then only Virtue found again the power of speech. She learnt to discover the unrestrained gestures of exaltation and emotion, she was no longer ashamed of herself, and she created philosophies and poems for her own glorification. If we look for the sources of this current, we come upon Rousseau, but the mythical Rousseau, the phantom formed from the impression left by his writings (one might almost say again, his mythically interpreted writings) and by the indications that he provided himself. He and his public constantly worked at the fashioning of this ideal figure. The other origin lies in the resurrection of the Stoical side of Rome's greatness, whereby the French so nobly carried on the task of the Renaissance. With striking success they proceeded from the reproduction of antique forms to the reproduction of antique characters. Thus they may always claim a title to the highest honours, as the nation which has hitherto given the modern world its best books and its best men. How this twofold archetype, the mythical Rousseau and the resurrected spirit of Rome, affected France's weaker neighbours, is particularly noticeable in Germany, which, in consequence of her novel and quite unwonted impulse to seriousness and loftiness in will and self-control, finally came to feel astonishment at her own newfound virtue, and launched into the world the concept "German, virtue," as if this were the most